

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1405

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 2817

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN PM RIFAI PRESS CONFERENCE ON MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS

SUMMARY: IN PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 11, JORDANIAN PM ZAYD RIFAI STATED THAT 1) SEC. KISSINGER HAS AGREED NEGOTIATIONS FOR JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT WILL FOLLOW SETTLEMENT ON SYRIAN FRONT; 2) GOJ UNPREPARED DISCUSS ANY OTHER SUBJECT WITH ISRAELIS UNTIL GOI BEGINS WITHDRAWAL FROM JORDAN RIVER; (3) JORDAN HAS REJECTED EARLIER ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT PROPOSAL CONDITIONED ON RETENTION ISRAELI MILITARY POSITIONS IN JORDAN VALLEY AND POSTPONEMENT JERUSALEM QUESTION; 4) ARABS SHOULD FIRST LIBERATE WEST BANK, THEN CONCENTRATE ON ITS POLITICAL FUTURE; 5) JORDAN DOES NOT RECOG-
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NIZE ANY OTHER AUTHORITY OVER WEST BANK AND

WILL NOT ATTEND GENEVA CONFERENCE UNLESS THERE
FULL COORDINATION BETWEEN JORDAN, EGYPT, SYRIA AND PLO
ON ARAB POSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN AMMAN INTERVIEW MAY 11 WITH CORRESPONDENTS
OF SEVERAL BEIRUT NEWSPAPERS INCLUDING AN-NAHAR,
JORDANIAN PREMIER ZAYD RIFAI DISCUSSED MIDDLE
EAST SITUATION, CONCENTRATING ON 1) GOJ CONDITIONS
FOR JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT ALONG JORDAN
RIVER, 2) JORDAN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PLO AND ES-
TABLISHMENT OF PALESTINIAN STATE, AND (3)
STRATEGY BEHIND JORDAN ARMY DEPLOYMENT DURING
OCTOBER WAR. MAIN POINTS FOLLOW.

2. CONDITIONS FOR JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT.

RIFAI STATED GOJ AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAVE AGREED
THAT AS SOON AS SEPARATION OF FORCES COMPLETED ON
SYRIAN FRONT, EFFORTS WILL BE CONCENTRATED ON DIS-
ENGAGEMENT ON JORDANIAN FRONT. HOWEVER, JORDAN UN-
PREPARED TO DISCUSS ANY OTHER SUBJECT RELATING TO
PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT UNTIL ISRAEL BEGINS WITHDRAWAL
FROM JORDAN VALLEY AS FIRST STEP TOWARD COMPLETE
ISRAELI EVACUATION OF WEST BANK. THIS PULLBACK MUST BE
"ALL ALONG THE RIVER LINE EXTENDING FROM THE NORTH
TO THE DEAD SEA, AND TO A DISTANCE TO THE WEST TO
BE AGREED UPON". RIFAI SAID JORDANIAN PLAN REPRE-
SENTS TEST OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS AND SINCERITY.

3. RIFAI SAID JORDAN REJECTED ISRAELI COUNTER-
PROPOSAL EXPRESSING ISRAEL'S READINESS TO WITH-
DRAW FROM WEST BANK ON BASIS THAT JORDANIAN AD-
MINISTRATION WOULD BE RESTORED IN ALL AREAS FROM
WHICH ISRAEL WITHDREW, PROVIDED THAT JORDAN AGREED
TO ISRAEL'S RETAINING SERIES OF MILITARY POSITIONS
ALONG JORDAN RIVER AND THAT QUESTION OF JERUSALEM
BE POSTPONED. PM ASSERTED THAT KING HUSSEIN HAS STATED ON SEVERAL
OCCASIONS THAT ISRAEL MUST WITHDRAW COMPLETELY
FROM WEST BANK AND ARAB JERUSALEM.

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4. PLO AND PALESTINIAN STATE. RIFAI SAID ARABS
MUST FIRST AGREE ON HOW TO LIBERATE LAND RATHER
THAN DIFFER ON ITS FUTURE, WHILE IT STILL UNDER
OCCUPATION. CONCEPT OF "STATE OF PALESTINE" IN
FACT STILL UNDEFINED: WHERE ARE ITS FRONTIERS,
WHAT IS ITS TERRITORY, WHAT ARE THE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN ARABS; "IF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF
THE PALESTINIANS ARE TO BE CONFINED TO ESTABLISHING

A STATE THAT INCLUDES THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP, THEN WHY DID WE FIGHT THE JUNE WAR OF 1967 WHEN THAT LAND WAS THEN UNOCCUPIED?" MOREOVER, IS MERE ESTABLISHMENT OF PALESTINIAN STATE -IN-EXILE BASED IN BEIRUT OR ANY OTHER ARAB CAPITAL SUFFICIENT TO RESOLVE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE?

5. RIFAI STATED THAT PLO'S INSISTENCE THAT IT HAS SOLE RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR PALESTINIANS AND TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS, INCLUDING INSURING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, DOES NOT SERVE PALESTINIAN CAUSE OR PEOPLE; ON THE CONTRARY, IT STRENGTHENS ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF WEST BANK. JORDAN, EGYPT, SYRIA AND PLO MUST COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS IN ANY INTERNATIONAL FORUM, AND COMPLEMENTARY ROLES SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN THEM. IF THIS JORDANIAN VIEW NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, JORDAN WILL NOT ATTEND GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE.

6. AFTER LIBERATION, WEST BANKERS WILL THEMSELVES SELECT WHATEVER GOVERNMENT THEY WANT, BUT BEFORE THAT TIME JORDAN WILL NOT AGREE TO ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT HAVING AUTHORITY OVER WEST BANK AS LONG AS JORDAN HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR AREA, SINCE IT ORIGINALLY PART OF JORDANIAN HOMELAND. ALTHOUGH GOJ HAS NO INFORMATION TO INDICATE SYRIA, SAUDI ARABIA, OR EGYPT HAVE APPROVED ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINE STATE, JORDAN WOULD ACCEPT COLLECTIVE DECISION SHOULD THESE STATES SO AGREE.

7. PM RIFAI REVEALED THAT JORDAN REJECTED A PROPOSAL BY PLO TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE WITH IT PROVIDED CERTAIN CONDITIONS MET.
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8. STRATEGY OF JORDAN ARMY IN OCTOBER WAR. JORDAN POSITION DURING WAR RESULT OF PRIOR AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA AND EGYPT. JORDAN ARMY'S MAIN TASK WAS TO PROTECT LEFT FLANK OF SYRIAN TROOPS IN CASE OF ISRAELI ATTEMPT TO ATTACK SYRIA THROUGH JORDANIAN TERRITORY. THUS JORDANIAN TROOPS RUSHED TO UM QAIS POSITION IN JORDAN IN ORDER PROTECT SYRIAN LEFT FLANK. WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES DEMANDED IT, JORDAN THREW IN RESERVES TO AID SYRIAN BROTHERS. OTHER TASK OF ARMY WAS TO KEEP LARGE NUMBER OF ISRAELI TROOPS DEPLOYED IN JORDAN VALLEY, WHICH WAS SUCCESSFUL.

COMMENT: GOJ APPEARS TO BE FIRING UP ITS

PUBLIC MIDEAST NEGOTIATING POSITION IN HOPES
FOCUS WILL TURN TO JORDAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS
FOLLOWING CURRENT ISRAELI-SYRIAN ROUND. CURRENT
GOJ TACTIC IS TO CORRECT MISIMPRESSION THAT
JORDAN HAS GIVEN UP INTEREST IN ACTIVELY NEGOTIATING
FOR RETURN OF WEST BANK. AT SAME TIME,
JORDAN SEEMS TO THREATEN THAT IT WILL NOT ALLOW
ARAB STATES TO PLAY DOUBLE GAME OF PROMOTING
EVENTUAL PRIMACY OF PLO ON WEST BANK WHILE USING
JORDAN TO PLAY KEY ROLE OF INITIATING NEGOTIATIONS
WITH ISRAEL.
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